

# Canine Bulletin

Nebraska Task Force - 1

March 2005

## The Working Pack

Submitted by: Kyle Tjelmeland

Training a canine to do a specific job is a grueling and time-consuming task. During the training there are often times of happiness and pride. This can be as simple as your dog sitting for the first time, or as complex as finding a person inside a collapsed structure. As a trainer, this is what we should strive towards to achieve perfection.

The problem that we encounter along the journey is that training is not always happy and fun. If you are not dedicated to your trade, it can be frustrating to the point of quitting. This can be through faults of the handler, the canine, or other circumstances beyond our control. There is obviously nothing that we can do about the unknown circumstances in training or in life. However we can, and need, to control the other two aspects of the training. These two, the handler and the canine, form the working pack.

In this working pack the handler **must** be the leader. If you do not have a strong leader, your pack will stray, wander, and possibly fail. Remember; a dog is a dog. One of the biggest problems made by a handler is referred to as Anthromorphism. Anthromorphism is defined as giving inanimate, or non-human objects, human-like qualities. A dog does not reason; it thinks in two ways: I like it : I don't like it. A canine does not search for a trapped person because he thinks that they need his help, he searches because they play with him and he likes to play and because he is following the directions of the pack leader - **You**. Problems can occur if you start to treat the canine like a human and not like a dog. I do not mean you have to throw them outside without food or water and have them fend for themselves. I am talking about when human emotions get to the point that they confuse the canine about who is the leader of the pack. A dog's natural instinct is to follow a strong leader and, if that leader isn't strong, take his place. If your position is unclear, you are

going to have problems in your training. A pack leader in the wild feeds first, fights first, and fornicates first. He tells the others in the pack what to do and they obey. That is the hierarchy of the pack. If there are any problems inside the pack, they are quickly taken care of by the pack leader. Therefore, if there is a problem in your pack and you are the leader, it is your responsibility to fix it.

Once this hierarchy is established, it will make other training issues easier to fix. **There is nothing wrong with backing up in training.** If you do not have a solid base for the training, you will have problems. You cannot expect to build on a weak foundation and not have problems. Nobody likes to do hard work all of the time, and canines are no different. Be sure you give the canine great praise and rewards for the simplest task. Remember, they are working for you. If a problem persists, the

problem may be you or what you are doing.

The second aspect in training is the canine. Canines cannot reason, but we can manipulate them into doing things that we want to achieve. When you are looking for a canine, pick one suited for the task and for your experience level, and ask yourself "what do I want to achieve with this dog?" Most of the "problems" canines have can be figured out and "fixed" over time. Canines, just like people, have problems. These problems can be obvious or come out during training. I am a firm believer that some canines, like people, have problems that cannot be overcome.

Every working pack has problems that need to be fixed and there are always problems that will appear. But if you remember that a dog is a dog and not a human, you will look at your training in a different way and it will make it easier for both of you. This will help make your working pack the best it can be.

**If you do not have a solid base for the training, you will have problems. You cannot expect to build on a weak foundation and not have problems. Nobody likes to do hard work all of the time, and canines are no different. Be sure you give the canine great praise and rewards for the simplest task.**

## Kyle's New Partner

Submitted by: Elaine Sawtell

His name is Kilo. He's got pointy ears. He's a young Malinois, about 16 months old. He doesn't know much about being a Cop Dog, but he's learning.

NETF1 Canine Search Specialist Kyle Tjelmeland's new canine partner is one of four dogs recently purchased by the Springfield, MO, Police Department. They are undergoing 10 weeks of training in drug detection, tracking, evidence search, patrol work, and handler protection.

In April, shortly after Kyle and Kilo complete training and are ready for the streets, Kyle and K9 Reggie, his flop-eared dog, will attend CSS School in Indiana.

Remember, Kyle's Pointy Ears, Police Work; Floppy Ears, FEMA work. Got it?



Dave Cygan and Bailey at Conco



Dave Cygan and Bailey at Conco

## How Do I Submit Items for the Canine Bulletin

Mail, E-mail, or Fax items to:

Julie McGahan

Lincoln Fire & Rescue

1801 iQî Street

Lincoln, NE 68508

[jmcgahan@ci.lincoln.ne.us](mailto:jmcgahan@ci.lincoln.ne.us)

Fax: 441-8292

Phone: 441-8352

Address/  
Phone #  
Changes Also  
contact Julie



Mail your  
training logs to:  
**Jaimie Merryman**  
5435 N.W. 1st St  
Lincoln, NE 68521

